

“(I) test an individual’s English language proficiency levels to assess oral and literacy gains from the beginning and throughout program enrollment;

“(II) combine training specific to a particular occupation or occupational cluster, with—

“(aa) English language instruction, such as instruction through an English as a Second Language program, or an English for Speakers of Other Languages program;

“(bb) basic skills instruction; and

“(cc) supportive services;

“(III) effectively integrate public and private sector entities, including the local workforce investment system and its functions, to achieve the goals of the program; and

“(IV) require matching or in-kind resources from private and nonprofit entities.

“(ii) PERMISSIBLE COMPONENTS.—The program may offer other services, as necessary to promote successful participation and completion, including work-based learning, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services.

“(B) GOAL.—Each program that receives funding under this subsection shall be designed to prepare limited English proficient adults for, and place such adults in, employment in growing industries with identifiable career ladder paths.

“(C) PROGRAM TYPES.—In selecting programs to receive funding under this subsection, the Secretary shall select programs that meet 1 or more of the following criteria:

“(i) A program that—

“(I) serves unemployed, limited English proficient individuals with significant work experience or substantial education but persistently low wages; and

“(II) aims to prepare such individuals for, and place such individuals in, higher paying employment, defined for purposes of this subparagraph as employment that provides at least 75 percent of the median wage in the local area.

“(ii) A program that—

“(I) serves limited English proficient individuals with lower levels of oral and written fluency, who are working but at persistently low wages; and

“(II) aims to prepare such individuals for, and place such individuals in, higher paying employment, through services provided at the work site, or at a location central to several work sites, during work hours.

“(iii) A program that—

“(I) serves unemployed, limited English proficient individuals with lower levels of oral and written fluency, who have little or no work experience; and

“(II) aims to prepare such individuals for, and place such individuals in, employment through services that include subsidized employment, in addition to the components required in subparagraph (A)(i).

“(iv) A program that includes funds from private and nonprofit entities.

“(D) PROGRAM APPROACHES.—In selecting programs to receive funding under this subsection, the Secretary shall select programs with different approaches to integrated workforce training, in different contexts, in order to obtain comparative data on multiple approaches to integrated workforce training and English language instruction, to ensure programs are tailored to characteristics of individuals with varying skill levels and to assess how different curricula work for limited English proficient populations. Such approaches may include—

“(i) bilingual programs in which the workplace language component and the training are conducted in a combination of an individual’s native language and English;

“(ii) integrated workforce training programs that combine basic skills, language

instruction, and job specific skills training; or

“(iii) sequential programs that provide a progression of skills, language, and training to ensure success upon an individual’s completion of the program.

“(8) EVALUATION BY ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—Each eligible entity that receives a grant under this subsection for a program shall carry out a continuous program evaluation and an evaluation specific to the last phase of the program operations.

“(9) EVALUATION BY SECRETARY.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of program impacts of the programs funded under the demonstration project, with a random assignment, experimental design impact study done at each worksite at which such a program is carried out.

“(B) DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS.—The Secretary shall collect and analyze the data from the demonstration project to determine program effectiveness, including gains in language proficiency, acquisition of skills, and job advancement for program participants.

“(C) REPORT.—The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and make available to the public, a report on the demonstration project, including the results of the evaluation.

“(10) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide technical assistance to recipients of grants under this subsection throughout the grant periods.

“(11) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 174(b), there are authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2006—

“(A) \$10,000,000 to make grants under paragraph (3); and

“(B) \$1,000,000 to carry out paragraph (9).”.

By Mr. CRAIG (for himself and Mr. BURNS):

S. 835. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a non-refundable tax credit for elder care expenses; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Senior Elder Care Relief and Empowerment Act—the SECURE Act.

The SECURE Act would provide eligible taxpayers with a nonrefundable tax credit equal to 50 percent of qualified expenses incurred on behalf of senior citizens above a \$1,000 spending floor.

The Senate Special Committee on Aging, which I chaired in the 108th Congress and of which I remain a member, held several hearings over the last couple years on different facets of the growing long-term care crisis in this country. A major concern of mine is that the Federal long-term care policy mix may not have the right incentives—especially when it comes to the tough choices faced by families who want to care for their frail and aging relatives.

More and more families are facing the stress and financial difficulties that come with caring for their aging parents.

It is critical to note that families, not government, provide 80 percent of

long-term care for older persons in the United States. This is an enormous strength of our long-term care system. The U.S. Administration on Aging reports that about 22 million people serve as informal caregivers for seniors with at least one limitation on their activities of daily living.

These caregivers often face extreme stress and financial burden—especially those we call the sandwich generation. The sandwich generation refers to those sandwiched between caring for their aging parents and caring for their own children.

It is difficult for families to balance caring for children and saving or paying for college, while at the same time struggling with financing care for frail and aging parents.

Many caregivers forgo job promotions, reduce their hours on the job, cut back to part-time, or take extended leaves of absence to stay at home and care for their aging family members. Direct expenses include the cost of prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, home modifications, and physical therapy.

Caregivers also endure emotional and personal health strains.

The average age of a caregiver is 57, with one-third over age 65 themselves. Caregivers suffer from higher rates of depression or anxiety. These conditions often lead to higher risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, or other chronic conditions.

For many families, the nursing home is the only solution for providing long-term care, and that can be a good choice. For other families, keeping aging and vulnerable relatives in their own home or in the caregiver’s home makes sense.

Family caregiving for aging and vulnerable relatives requires a flexible national response to ensure seniors and their families have the most appropriate high quality choices.

That is why I am introducing the SECURE Act. This legislation would help reduce the financial strain and related emotional and medical stress faced by family caregivers, as they care for their frail and aging parents, by providing much-needed tax relief for qualified expenses.

The SECURE Act would increase the eldercare choices available to families and has the potential to reduce the number of seniors forced to spend down their nest-egg in order to qualify for Medicaid services.

Qualified expenses include costs that are not reimbursable—those not covered by Medicare or other insurance—for physical assistance with essential daily activities to prevent injury; long-term care expenses, including normal household services; architectural expenses necessary to modify the senior’s residence; respite care; adult daycare; assisted living services that are non-housing related expenses; independent living; home care; and home health care.

Seniors with long-term care needs also would be able to use the tax credit on their own behalf.